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Thursday, February 15, 2018 metro.us | t: MetroNewYork | f: MetroNewYork



'BLACK PANTHER'

The superhero movie of the year has finally arrived. "Black Panther" feels so fresh and unique that it's just embarrassing Hollywood took so long to make it.

Read all about it:

Q&A with the villain 15

The review 16

Box office 17

Analysis 18



MARVEL STUDIOS

Will Rikers close sooner
than expected? 4

Multiple people killed in Florida
school shooting. 13

Eat your way to
prosperity. 20

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GREGORY WAKEMAN, FEATURES REPORTER

The 18th installment to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, "Black Panther," might just be their most important, best film yet. Directed by Ryan Coogler and boasting stunning performances from Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira and Letitia Wright, as well as amazing action and a distinctive style, everyone's going to be talking about "Black Panther" for myriad reasons. Join the conversation by checking out pages 15-18 and visiting metro.us.

TRUMP LAWYER SAYS HE PAID PORN STAR

IA private lawyer for President Donald Trump says he paid \$130,000 of his own money to adult film star Stormy Daniels who claimed she had an affair with Trump more than a decade ago. The payment to Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, was made during the 2016 presidential election campaign but the lawyer, Michael Cohen, said he was working alone and that it was not a campaign expense.

"Neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Ms. Clifford, and neither reimbursed me for the payment, either directly or indirectly," Cohen said in a statement on Tuesday night. Daniels was quoted as saying in a 2011 interview with In Touch Weekly that she had an affair with Trump after they met at a Lake Tahoe golf tournament in 2006. Trump has denied the affair with Daniels.

WH FACES PRESSURE OVER AIDE'S DEPARTURE

2 President Donald Trump faced new pressure on Wednesday from his Republican allies in Congress over domestic abuse allegations against a former aide as lawmakers questioned whether his administration has properly vetted top staffers. Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said he was investigating when the White House learned

of "potential derogatory or disqualifying information" about former Staff Secretary Rob Porter. Porter left the White House last week after two former wives said he abused them. He has denied the accusations. "The chronology is not favorable for the White House," Gowdy said on CNN. Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan, meanwhile, said the White House should improve its vetting process.



SHOOTING AT HIGH SCHOOL IN FLORIDA INJURES MULTIPLE PEOPLE

3 People are brought out of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School after a shooting at the school that reportedly killed and injured multiple people on Wednesday in Parkland, Florida. Numerous law enforcement officials continue to investigate the scene. **For more on the shooting, see page 13.**

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

TRUMP'S PARADE COULD COST MILLIONS

4 The military parade that President Donald Trump wants to stage, likely in Washington, would cost U.S. taxpayers up to \$30 million, the White House budget chief said on Wednesday in remarks on the administration's fiscal 2019 spending plan. Mick Mulvaney, was asked about the parade, which Trump's spending plan does not break out as a specific item. "The estimates I've seen,

they're very preliminary, is between \$10 million and \$30 million, depending upon the length," said Mulvaney, director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. "Obviously an hour parade is different from a five-hour parade in terms of the cost and the equipment and those types of things." Trump came up with the idea after a 2017 trip to France, according to media reports.

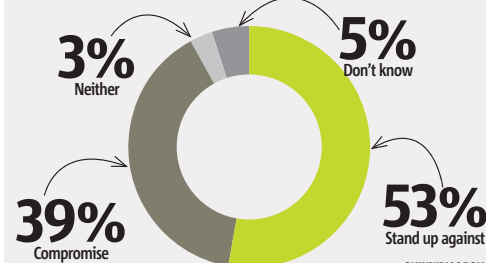
SPACEX GETS OK ON SATELLITE INTERNET

5 Elon Musk's SpaceX, fresh off the successful launch this month of the world's most powerful rocket, won an endorsement on Wednesday from the top U.S. communications regulator to build a broadband network using satellites. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai proposed the approval of the application. "Satellite technology can help reach Americans who live in rural

or hard-to-serve places where fiber optic cables and cell towers do not reach," Pai said in a statement. SpaceX told the FCC in a Feb. 1 letter that it plans to launch a pair of experimental satellites on one of its Falcon 9 rockets. That launch, already approved, is set for Saturday in California. The rocket will carry the PAZ satellite for Hisdesat of Madrid, Spain, and multiple smaller secondary payloads.

SENATOR CHUCK SCHUMER

Would you like to see Sen. Chuck Schumer do more to stand up against President Trump or do more to compromise?



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The isolated Rikers Island jail is currently set to be shut down by 2027. GETTY IMAGES

State officials say Rikers Island should close sooner

The city has a 10-year timeline for closing Rikers Island, but a state report, citing violence at the jail, says it should shutter sooner.



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Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a plan to close Rikers Island within 10 years back in June, but a new report from state officials may hasten the city's main jail's shuttering.

The Commission of Correction released a report Wednesday on the "most problematic" correctional facilities in New York state and Rikers Island, the 413-acre complex housing about 9,000 inmates, was one of the worst offenders.

The report notes that violent incidents at Rikers have risen between 2016 and 2017, despite more attention from city and state officials.

These violent incidents include "assaults, sex offenses and facility disturbances," according to the report, and a review of inmate deaths found "numerous instances where a death was attributable to deficient medical care, substandard mental health services, or inadequate custody and supervision by security staff."

"Given the city's inac-

tion and protracted 10-year proposal," the report continued, "it is now time for the Commission to examine steps to expeditiously close Rikers and to ensure that the constitutional rights of inmates and staff are protected."

Alphonso David, chief counsel to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, said in a statement that state officials will demand a resolution to these conditions at Rikers, and criticized de Blasio's timeline as being "wholly unacceptable."

"The governor, who has been fighting for meaningful criminal justice reform his entire career, has repeatedly said 10 years is too long because 'justice delayed is justice denied,'" his statement continued. "A fair, safe, and humane criminal justice system is essential for our state, and we will make it such."

**"A fair, safe,
and humane
criminal
justice
system is
essential for
our state, and
we will make
it such."**

Alphonso David

The city is taking more steps to handle Rikers, with de Blasio announcing on Wednesday an agreement with City Council to create community-based facilities as a replacement.

These new facilities will house 5,000 detainees, according to the city. Existing Department of Correction spaces in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx, as well as a new site in the Bronx, will be part of the new system.

"This agreement marks a huge step forward on our path to closing Rikers Island," de Blasio said in a statement. "In partnership with the City Council, we can now move ahead with creating a borough-based jail system that's smaller, safer and fairer."

The New York City Department of Correction also announced Wednesday that the de Blasio Administration has allocated \$4.5 million for new security measures to address violence against correctional officers.

The measures, to be completed by June 2018, the department said, include adding more emergency response patrol units to the most high-violence facilities on Rikers, at \$3.6 million annually.

Other safety efforts include expanding the number of tasers for select staff and better coordinating gang information between NYPD and corrections facilities.

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Nonprofit helps kids stay on city tennis courts even in winter

"Tennis is a lonely sport, and in the winter, it gets lonelier, and that's where this came from," said Mike Silverman of the City Parks Foundation.



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Thanks to the weather and the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, winter sports fever has pretty much hit us all. A group of tennis-loving New York City kids, however, aren't just counting the days until they can hit the courts again, they're actually still playing regularly.

Thanks to PlayToday, a program of the City

Parks Foundation (CPF), nearly 200 youth tennis players are able to continue training at several indoor "bubble" courts across the city.

"It's an extension of what we do in the summer, when we offer a free tennis program for about 6,000 kids in 38 parks in the five boroughs," said Mike Silverman, director of sports for CPF, which is a nonprofit not affiliated with the city's Department of Parks and Recreation. "Tennis is a lonely sport, and in the winter, it gets lonelier, and that's where this came from."

Bubble court times, which are very limited, can range from \$40 to \$150 for an hour, "so it makes tennis really restrictive," Silverman said.

"With the PlayToday card, it's \$5," said Akash Hongal, a 13-year-old ten-

nis player from Flushing.

Hongal has been part of CPF's tennis program since 2012 and can now play five times a month during the off-season with about 200 other intermediate and advanced players. Kids ages 12 and up can benefit from year-round court time and free instruction.

"It's a great sport, and I really enjoying playing it, especially when we're competing," Hongal said. "It helped me out in school, and I've started to grow more and more athletic."

His father, Mahesh, is proud to see that progression. "My son has gone from being a kid who knows how to play tennis to being one of the best," he said.

Hongal plans to play tennis in high school and college — and maybe

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An aspiring tennis champ kept up with the sport during the offseason. CITY PARKS FOUNDATION

beyond as some of CPF's past participants have.

"We've seen kids come through the program who got college tennis scholarships or [U.S. Tennis Association] rankings through this," Silverman said. "It's been very rewarding to see that, to see the progress over the years of these beginners using tennis to better their lives."

In warmer months, CPF also offers golf, soccer, fitness and track and field, but tennis is "by far the biggest turnout," he said. "That's because of the facilities that we



Participating kids get tennis court access at a reduced cost. CITY PARKS FOUNDATION



Billie Jean King Tennis Center hosts kids in Flushing. ISTOCK

have. New York City has more public tennis courts than any other city in the country, over 700 I believe."

And it doesn't hurt that we're home to the U.S. Open. In fact, its

USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing is the most popular court CPF kids play on in winter.

For more info, visit cityparksfoundation.org.

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The MTA schedule will be altered this Monday. iStock

What to know about the MTA Presidents Day schedule

Not everyone gets a three-day weekend, but at least it may be easier to grab a seat.



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While many New Yorkers are likely looking forward to having Monday off for the Presidents' Day holiday, plenty of us will still be making the trek into the office.

If you're one of those who will be without a three-day weekend, here's what you can expect as service changes come from the MTA on Presidents Day Monday.

Buses and subways

New York City Transit buses and subways will run on a Saturday schedule, so subway lines that usually run on weekdays but not on weekends will not have service on Presidents' Day. That means there will be no 6 or 7 express service or B trains, and straphangers should use the J train instead of the Z train.

Planned work, like that taking place on the 2/3 subways on weekends, will also be in effect Monday.

LIRR

The Long Island Rail Road will operate on a

holiday schedule with off-peak fares in effect all day, and there will be an additional train departing Ronkonkoma at 7:07 a.m., which will arrive at Penn Station at 8:30 a.m.

The train will stop at Central Islip (7:14 a.m.), Brentwood (7:18 a.m.), Deer Park (7:22 a.m.), Wyandanch (7:27 a.m.), Farmingdale (7:33 a.m.), Bethpage (7:39 a.m.), Hicksville (7:46 a.m.), Jamaica (8:09 a.m.) and Woodside (8:19 a.m.).

Metro-North

Metro-North will run on a Saturday schedule with off-peak fares in effect all Presidents Day, and Grand Central Terminal's north-end exits at 46th, 47th and 48th streets will be closed.

The Hudson Rail Link, Newburgh-Beacon Ferry and Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry will not operate.

Staten Island Railway

Staten Islanders can get an early start to their three-day weekend with extra service starting Friday at 2:30 p.m. from the St. George Ferry Terminal. One express and one local train will await every vessel until 7:50 p.m.

On Presidents Day, the SIR will run on its Sunday schedule.

Visit mta.info for complete service schedules and other updates.



LIRR GETTY IMAGES

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People are convinced there's an inappropriate 'secret' object painted in Obama's portrait

Some are convinced that former President Barack Obama's portrait — in which he's seated in a greenery-hedged chair, posture comfortable, face calculated — contains "secret sperm." As tradition goes, President Barack Obama got his portrait done. So did Michelle (and her remarkably sculpted arms). Unveiled Monday, they're the talk of the town (aka the World Wide Web), and not just because the ex-presidential duo was the first to commission black artists to do the job (hers by Amy Sherald; his, Kehinde Wiley).

"I tried to negotiate less gray hair and Kehinde's artistic integrity would not allow [him] to do what I asked," Obama said Monday at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. And excess gray aside, he got more than he bargained for.

The rumor picked up steam after Fox News host Sean Hannity tweeted: "Obama's portrait—a stark contrast to predecessors with inappropriate sexual innuendo," and linked to an article on his website. Both were soon deleted.

But the cached article headlined "PORTRAIT PERVERSION: Obama Portrait Features 'SECRET SPERM'..." can still be seen. Wiley, a contemporary artist, is known for realistic portraits of African-Americans, which, according to his Facebook page, apply conventions of wealth and prestige and tie in inspiration from historical works.

The article on Hannity's site claims a vein by Obama's left temple — one that has been documented in a number of photos — is sperm.

It was revealed that

the "secret sperm" theory appeared to have started in a 4Chan thread.

"Earlier today my web staff posted content that was not reviewed by me before publication," Hannity told The Daily Beast. "It does not reflect my voice and message."

The bizarre article pointed to a 2008 New York Times piece as evidence for Wiley's potential motive, which stated, "[Wiley's] portraits initially depicted African-American men against rich textile or wallpaper backgrounds whose patterns he has likened to abstractions of sperm. Some of the subjects were famous (rap and sports stars), others not."

Wiley couldn't be reached for comment.

Snopes has debunked the sperm theory, noting that the claim's dubious sources, 4Chan and noted racist troll Alex Jones, also perpetuated the Obama "birther" myth. "Although both sources were correct in pointing out that some of Wiley's previous works featured direct and indirect representations of spermatozoa meant to mock 'the highly charged masculinity' (as one art critic put it) that so often characterizes classical Western portraiture," the site said, "They leapt a bit too eagerly to the conclusion that a faithfully-reproduced vein popping out of Obama's forehead is in fact a giant sperm cell. Clearly, it is nothing of the kind. Nor were we able to detect representations of sperm cells anywhere else in the images of Obama's portrait currently available on the internet."

SAM BRODSKY



Obama stands beside his presidential portrait at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. GETTY IMAGES

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...the Pain Is More Like A Prison

And for generations, knee arthritis has given good, hard working people a life sentence of pain and suffering. To make things worse, slick marketers only add to the pain by promising wonder cures. Late night television and your mail box are filled with "wonder arthritis cures" that make wild claims and sound too good to be true . . . ***Because They Are***

Nothing is worse than getting your hopes up - spending your hard earned money - only to be let down time after time.

It is easy to give up...

But while marketers were peddling "wonder cures," real doctors and researchers were hard at work trying to discover a real medical solution. Modern medicine eradicated small pox and polio. Through laser eye surgery, doctors can give almost blind people perfect 20/20 vision. The potential cures on the horizon with breakthroughs like stem cell and regenerative therapies are endless.

Solve The Riddle Of Arthritis Pain?

For the past 3 years, that's exactly what a medical clinic in New York City has been doing. The ***NYC Pain MD*** doctors have been able to help thousands of knee arthritis sufferers with cutting-edge treatments and technology older generations could only dream about. One of these treatments in particular has helped thousands of patients ease or eliminate pain and go back to doing their favorite activities like: walking, playing golf, tennis and many more. The treatment is called viscosupplementation. *But wait.* This is NOT the typical viscosupplementation. So if you are one of the many knee arthritis sufferers who already had viscosupplementation and did not get great results - what you are about to discover should be very important. to you in particular. It might even get you out of pain.

Here is why: During viscosupplementation, a special lubricating gel is put directly into your arthritic knee joint. This not only helps the knee joint to glide more smoothly, it acts as a cushion, protects the joint. and relieves a lot of pain. This is often referred to as "joint oil." In many cases, when done properly, this can dramatically lessen knee pain for up to 6 months and much longer in many cases.

And even better - if this treatment works for you the first time - it can be safely repeated when necessary and the results are often better for some.

Like Threading A Needle?

The key to this treatment being successful is actually getting the special lubricating gel directly into the joint where it can go to work. That's why the doctors at ***NYC Pain MD*** use very advanced digital imaging that allows them to see directly into the joint and make sure the lubricating gel "hits the spot" and the treatment has the best odds for success. Studies show that doctors doing these types of procedures without this special imaging actually miss the joint space up to one third of the time!



"I've had trouble with my knee walking. I'm a golfer and want to play golf but I couldn't. I made the call and went and it's the best thing I ever did. It's just - now I can play golf, I can walk, I can climb stairs, I can do things I did many years ago".

"It's the smartest thing ever did" "Since I've been going for the treatment for my knees I don't take any pills, I take not over the counter medication.."

"This a good alternative to surgery." "I am so glad I went. I'm so confident I feel so good about it and I recommend it to everybody."

William La Spina . Golf Enthusiast

(While we cannot guarantee that all knee arthritis pain sufferers will respond like the patient noted above, we can say these results are possible.)

Why Treatment Can Fail

This is why viscosupplementation can fail for some people. It is also why many knee arthritis sufferers come to ***NYC Pain MD*** after failed treatments elsewhere... and are finally able to get relief. It is not uncommon for patients to travel hours for these advanced and precise treatment methods.

Patients Should Be Assured About Precision Treatments

If you have already had this procedure without this advanced imaging... Or if it was not used throughout the procedure, there is a good chance you did not get the maximum results you could have and should have.

What The Research Says About Results:

Can We Slow Down Arthritis? A retrospective study of nearly 1000 cases of knee arthritis between 49 and 79 years old was done by an orthopedic surgeon in Louisiana. Patients with Grade 4 or "bone to bone" who presented for consideration of knee replacement were instead put on a program of image-guided gel injection procedures. Follow up almost 4 years later revealed that about 3 of 4 had done well and had not need surgery...regardless of age or even if overweight.

Another study was done by Pearl Diver research group who reviewed 198,000 files of those who underwent this type of treatment. Follow up 2 years later revealed 82% had not required surgery.

Massive Cost Saving For Patients, Insurance Companies & Medicare?

While surgery may be the best option for some...for others, due to fear of surgical risk, medical ailments that may prohibit surgery or for those that are just seeking less invasive alternatives, the costs savings can be staggering. In a study published in the American Journal of Managed Care, a potential savings of \$4706.00 per patient if treated with viscosupplementation was estimated. In a theoretical population of 100,000 (NYC is over 10 million) over a 3 yr. period, 808 knee replacements were projected to be avoided and up to \$9,131,819 could potentially be saved by patients, medicare and insurance carriers. *This should be welcome news for rising health care costs.*

Who Can Benefit From This Treatment?

This treatment is not for everyone. But it may be for you if you have sensations of grinding or rubbing, pain on simple weight bearing, getting up from sitting or even simply

Treatments Their Parents Could Only Dream About

Patients Go Home With Just A Band-Aid On The Knee... No Surgery - No Hospital

when bending your knees, struggling up and down stairs (like subways), have pain on walking, feel tight and stiff after activities or in the morning or just cannot move like you used to. If this sounds like you, then seeing one of the specially trained doctors at **NYC Pain MD** could be the best thing you could do for yourself. But it is suggested you do not wait as arthritis can easily worsen with more time.

And this is very important - especially for those who have had viscosupplementation in the past without good results. Many patients who did not have good results elsewhere are often able to get a favorable results because of the advanced imaging technology and procedure experience at **NYC Pain MD**.

Even doctors themselves are often patients at NYC Pain MD.

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What should doctors say if a patient asks about e-cigarettes? GETTY IMAGES

Are e-cigarettes safe? Doctor lays out pros and cons

A new report sheds light on just how bad e-cigarettes are for you.

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT
kristin.toussaint@metro.us

There's plenty of evidence that smoking is bad for you, but the ruling on e-cigarettes isn't so clear. Do they help people quit, or do they get people to pick up the habit?

Nancy Rigotti, a physician at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School professor, hopes to shed more light on what doctors should tell patients who ask about e-cigs.

In a piece published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Rigotti lays out e-cigarettes' benefits and harms.

"E-cigarettes have the potential for enormous benefit if they help smokers quit," Rigotti writes. "[But] this benefit must be balanced against potential harm if e-cigarettes entice youths who would not otherwise have become cigarette smokers to try e-cigarettes, become addicted to nicotine and then switch to combustible cigarettes."

Rigotti is a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), which released a report on the public health consequences of e-cigarettes last month that was commissioned by the Food and Drug Administration.

The report's main finding was using e-cigs is less hazardous than continuing to smoke regular cigarettes because e-cigarettes don't burn tobacco.

Switching completely

from cigarettes to e-cigs will likely lower smoking-related health hazards, the experts found — but those who continue to smoke both types don't see these benefits.

The NASEM committee also found no evidence that e-cigarettes increase someone's risk of cardiovascular or pulmonary disease, cancer or other "adverse outcomes." However, Rigotti warns that "lack of evidence does not equal evidence of no risk."

More research on e-cigs' long-term effects are needed, Rigotti cautions.

Although the use of e-cigarettes may increase the chances that non-smoking teens will try combustible cigarettes, the NASEM report

concluded overall that the net effect of e-cigarettes is positive and will likely save lives over the next 50 years.

The NASEM report didn't, however, give advice for what doctors should tell smokers about these electronic versions.

That's why Rigotti added her own guidance in this week's publication.

"I tell patients that using e-cigarettes is less harmful than continuing to smoke cigarettes, but because e-cigarettes are so new, I caution them that questions about their long-term safety remain unanswered," she writes.

Rigotti wants people considering e-cigarettes that they should switch over to the devices to stop smoking combustible cigarettes before eventually stopping e-cigarettes, too.

"Overall, the message I aim to convey," she writes, "is that I will continue to support and assist patients on their journey to becoming nonsmokers."

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Several dead at Florida high school after ex-student opens fire

The bloodshed was the latest outbreak of gun violence that has become a regular occurrence at U.S. schools.

A former student at a Florida high school opened fire in the school on Wednesday, causing "numerous fatalities" and wounding at least 14 people before he was arrested by police, authorities said.

The attack took place shortly before dismissal at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, about 45 miles north of Miami, sending hundreds of students fleeing into the streets while police and emergency services swarmed.

"There are numerous fatalities. It's a horrific situation," Broward County Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie told reporters. He said the school district had no warning of a potential shooter and there was no evidence of more than one shooter.

The gunman, about 18 years old, surrendered to police quietly, said Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel.

The 14 wounded were transported to area hospitals, Israel said, offering few details on the shooter.

"There was a time when he did attend the school," Israel said. "I

don't know why he left, I don't know when he left."

Students hid until they were rescued by police, friends and family members said.

McKenzie Hartley, 19, identifying herself as the sister of a student, described the scene in a text message: "She heard him shooting through the windows of classrooms and two students were shot."

Parents rushed to check on their children.

"It is just absolutely horrifying. I can't believe this is happening," Lissette Rozenblat, whose daughter goes to the school, told CNN. Her daughter called her to say she was safe but said she heard the cries of a person who was shot.

"She was very nervous. She said that she could hear the person who was shot crying out for help," she told CNN. "My daughter is safe and I am very grateful."

Live television showed students, weaving between law enforcement officers and large numbers of emergency vehicles.

"My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting," President Donald Trump tweeted. "No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school."

Israel struggled to describe the scene: "It's catastrophic. There really are no words." REUTERS



Aerial shot of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School GETTY IMAGES



Students embrace following a school shooting in Florida. GETTY IMAGES

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF A FOOD SERVICE FACILITY AT VILLAGE HALL IN TAPPEN PARK, STATEN ISLAND

In accordance with Section 1-15 of the Concession Rules of the City of New York, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation ("Parks") is issuing, as of the date of this notice, a significant Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the development, operation, and maintenance of a food service facility at Village Hall in Tappen Park, Staten Island.

There will be a recommended proposer site tour on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at 4:00 pm. We will be meeting at the proposed concession site (Block #523 & Lot #1), which is located 111 Canal Street, Staten Island. We will be meeting in front of 111 Canal Street. If you are considering responding to this RFP, please make every effort to attend this recommended meeting. All proposals submitted in response to this RFP must be submitted no later than Monday, March 19, 2018 at 3:00pm.

Hard copies of the RFP can be obtained, at no cost, commencing on Monday, February 12, 2018 through Monday, March 19, 2018, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., excluding weekends and holidays, at the Revenue Division of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, which is located at 830 Fifth Avenue, Room 407, New York, NY 10065.

The RFP is also available for download, on Monday, February 12, 2018 through Monday, March 19, 2018, on Parks' website. To download the RFP, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/parks/businessopportunities> and click on the "Concessions Opportunities at Parks" link. Once you have logged in, click on the "download" link that appears adjacent to the RFP's description.

For more information or to request to receive a copy of the RFP by mail, prospective proposers may contact Darryl Milton, Project Manager, at (212) 360-3460 or at darryl.milton@parks.nyc.gov.

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Police tape blocks a visitor's entrance to the headquarters of the National Security Agency (NSA) after a shooting incident at the entrance in Fort Meade, Maryland, on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

Wrong turn could have sparked security scare at NSA, says FBI

Investigators said there was no reason to believe "that there is any nexus to terrorism."

A wrong turn may have led three men to drive onto the Washington-area campus of the U.S. National Security Agency on Wednesday, sparking a scare that drew gunfire from guards and sent three to the hospital, FBI officials said.

The FBI said there was no link to terrorism in the incident.

The motorists, who were not identified, drove to a gate of the secretive government agency in Fort Meade, Maryland, shortly before 7 a.m. Guards fired on the vehicle after it violated NSA security rules, officials said.

Gordon Johnson, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's special agent in charge for Baltimore, said at a news conference that officials were interviewing the men to determine their motive.

"That's our Question 1: What put these indi-

viduals on this compound earlier this morning?" he said.

Johnson said there was no reason to believe "that there is any nexus to terrorism."

The vehicle had what appeared to be bullet holes in its windshield and extensive front-end damage after crashing into a concrete traffic barrier, according to video of the scene.

"It looks like the gunfire was directed onto the vehicle," Johnson said, declining to say if weapons were found in the car. No one appeared to have been shot, he said.

Two of the people arrested were in the NSA's custody while the third, the driver of the vehicle, had been taken to a hospital with undisclosed injuries, Johnson said. An NSA police officer and a civilian bystander also suffered injuries that

were not life-threatening, he said.

The NSA, one of the U.S. government's main spy agencies, is headquartered at a U.S. Army facility about 30 miles north-east of Washington and just off a major highway. Investigators believe it is possible the three men made a wrong turn.

"People go down that NSA exit all the time," FBI spokesman Dave Fitz told reporters. "That's one of the theories."

A White House spokeswoman said President Donald Trump had been briefed on the shooting.

In March 2015, two people tried to drive through the NSA's gate. Officers shot at the vehicle when they refused to stop, killing one of the occupants. The people in the vehicle may have taken a wrong turn after partying and taking drugs, according to news reports. REUTERS

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'Black Panther' villain: It's time for diversity



"This is the time for it." MARVEL STUDIOS

Michael B. Jordan talks representation and identity in Hollywood.



GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

The importance of "Black Panther" goes way beyond a Rotten Tomatoes score, its box office gross or how it links up with "Avengers: Infinity War."

The cultural ramifications of Ryan Coogler's blockbuster and the performances of Chadwick Boseman, Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira, Letitia Wright and Michael B. Jordan are destined to be felt for many years to come, as audiences look set to embrace the diversity and authenticity that makes "Black Panther" feel so rich, distinctive and

original.

Metro spoke with Jordan about his performance as the villainous Erik "Killmonger" Stevens in the movie, and what it means to African-American audiences.

"I understand the importance of representation," he said. "You want to be able to identify with not just yourself but people you look like on screen, who are these characters and these roles and larger-than-life heroic superheroes."

Jordan's character travels to Wakanda, the fictional East African country that's home to superhero Black Panther, in order to dethrone Chadwick Boseman.

"As a 10-year-old I would have been motivated and inspired and had a range of emotions if I had watched this as a kid," he shared. "We've got to help these kids

dream. And to help their imagination so that they can see themselves in front of the camera and on screen like this."

"It really makes an impact on how they hold themselves, and the confidence they have. To be involved in that feels really good."

This wasn't the first time Jordan broached these issues on the big screen with co-writer and director Ryan Coogler ("Fruitvale Station," "Creed"), but it came naturally to the two friends.

"We really didn't talk about it all that much," Jordan revealed. "We kind of already knew what we were doing at this point. Representation and identity, and themes like that, we understand. When it came down to it all of the work was al-

ready done and we were just interested in shooting a movie."

And "Black Panther" is just the beginning. Because Jordan and his co-stars (mostly people of color) demand further blockbuster films with

identity, and themes like that, we understand. When it came down to it all of the work was al-

ethnically diverse casts and crews to follow the path they are paving.

"I definitely feel like this is the time for it, and that 'Black Panther' is going to open up the floodgates," he beamed. "Especially being backed by a studio like Marvel, we have the support of the biggest studio in the world. But it's also the cast, and not just that everything is going to be OK — but it's going to be awesome. All of that gives a validation to a property like this."

"There's a lot going on in our film. I just want people to go in there with an open mind and have some fun. Then, I guarantee they'll leave it with something more than they expect."

Join the millions of presale ticket holders and see "Black Panther" for yourself starting Friday.

"We've got to help these kids dream. And to help their imagination so that they can see themselves in front of the camera and on screen like this."



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The review: 'Black Panther' is a very good movie, and doesn't need to solve any problems

Take your garbage hot-takes out to the curb.



RACHAEL VAUGHAN CLEMMONS
rachael.clemmons@metro.us

Everybody has a sentiment they believe is worth sharing when it comes to "Black Panther." And some of them are very bad. "Black Panther" carries the hopes of the global African diaspora. "Does 'Black Panther' solve Hollywood's Africa problem?" "What exactly will the Black community gain [from 'Black Panther'], aside from another symbolic victory?"

Ahead of the film's premiere this Friday, I have but a simple request: Retire these senseless hot-takes. "Black Panther" isn't responsible for living up to some inessential expectations of what a

black superhero should be. And while there's no denying that there's never been a movie quite like this, it just feels like it might be more useful to enjoy the film and just, you know, celebrate the damn thing.

In fact, the only acceptable hot-take from the film is that Michael B. Jordan is at his peak, both acting and looks-wise, and Ryan Coogler should direct all the movies. As Erik Killmonger, Michael Bae Jordan is a rare villain in that he is devoid of cartoonish motivations. You're going to feel his pain, bro. Between that and the faux locs, I promise it'll make you feel some type of way.

Yes: watching "Black Panther" is certainly an emotional experience, especially for a black person. But it's bananas to say that it (or any other film, frankly) carries the hopes of all black people, or that it should be the

one film to solve Hollywood's Africa problem, whatever that is.

"Black Panther" might prove to studios that black narratives are bankable and it's certainly a major win that will go down in the pop culture echelon as a Very Important Moment. But America will still be racist. And representation in Hollywood isn't going to change overnight, either.

So while I plan on seeing Black Panther approximately seven more times, I also see it for what it is: a very good movie filled with very beautiful black people that should be held up and celebrated. It shouldn't be expected to solve any problems or speak for the global African diaspora (by the way, it's OK to just say "black.")

"Black Panther" doesn't need to be everything for everyone. It just needs to be enjoyed.



Let's talk less about how this film is carrying the troubles of all black people on its shoulders, and more about how gorgeous everyone is in it. **MARVEL**

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Box office: Will it be Marvel's highest grossing film yet?

Advance ticket sales are through the roof.



GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

Now that the superhero movie of the year is upon us, the excitement's palpable. The stunning critical response, manifested with a Rotten Tomatoes score of 98 percent, has combined perfectly with the blockbuster's marketing campaign and its avalanche of tantalizing clips and trailers to leave it on the cusp of becoming a pop culture phenomenon.

It's predicted that "Black Panther" will gross around \$170 million this weekend alone ... and that's just domestically. As the "most-tweeted-about movie" in 2018, it's expected that number is likely to be low.

This film has also already sold more advance IMAX tickets than any

other Marvel movie, and "Black Panther" is a contender to match or best the opening weekend grosses of "Iron Man 3" (\$174 million), "Captain America: Civil War" (\$179 million), "Avengers: Age of Ultron"



This movie brings a whole new meaning to "must see." MARVEL

(\$191 million) and even "The Avengers" (\$207 million), each of which individually brought in between \$1.153 billion and \$1.518 billion worldwide.

Why's that a big deal? First of all, the other four films mentioned

were released at the start of May, Marvel's prime time for unleashing its biggest film of the year, which also usually signals the start of the summer blockbuster season. February, on the other hand, is usually referred to as a cinematic graveyard, due to the cold weather, post-Christmas poverty and the interest in awards season.

Also, each of the aforementioned four films were sequels, and were led by superheroes that had already established their solo movie credentials in previous installments.

While "Black Panther's" success in the U.S. is all but guaranteed, a stellar performance internationally would have a huge impact on the movie industry.

Time will tell if "Black Panther" proves definitively that Hollywood has been tone deaf for far too long.

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Analysis: Why has it taken so long for a film like this to be made?

"Black Panther" feels so fresh and unique. This should make Hollywood feel ashamed.



GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

In Episode 6 of Ken Burns' seminal PBS documentary "Baseball," former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo says of Jackie Robinson's debut for the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947, an event that finally saw the color line broken in the sport: "Too late."

"It was a wonderful moment when it happened. But when I think of it, it brings pain, too. It was a great triumph. But why? Why did it take all those years? Why should it have been such a big event? Why weren't we capable of better?"

It was a quote I couldn't help but think of after watching "Black Panther," as it was a film that felt fresh, authentic and distinctive because

of its predominantly African-American cast and crew. The way it explored themes of representation and identity and how it presented African culture and mythology was like few others.

We rarely see those things on the big screen, and for no good reason. Thankfully, that's about to change.

Ryan Coogler's work as co-writer and director, the performances of Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira and Letitia Wright, and the freedom given to them by Marvel Studios to make the film that they desired (and that audiences demanded) has been so roundly celebrated that "Black Panther" is set to blossom into a worldwide phenomenon.

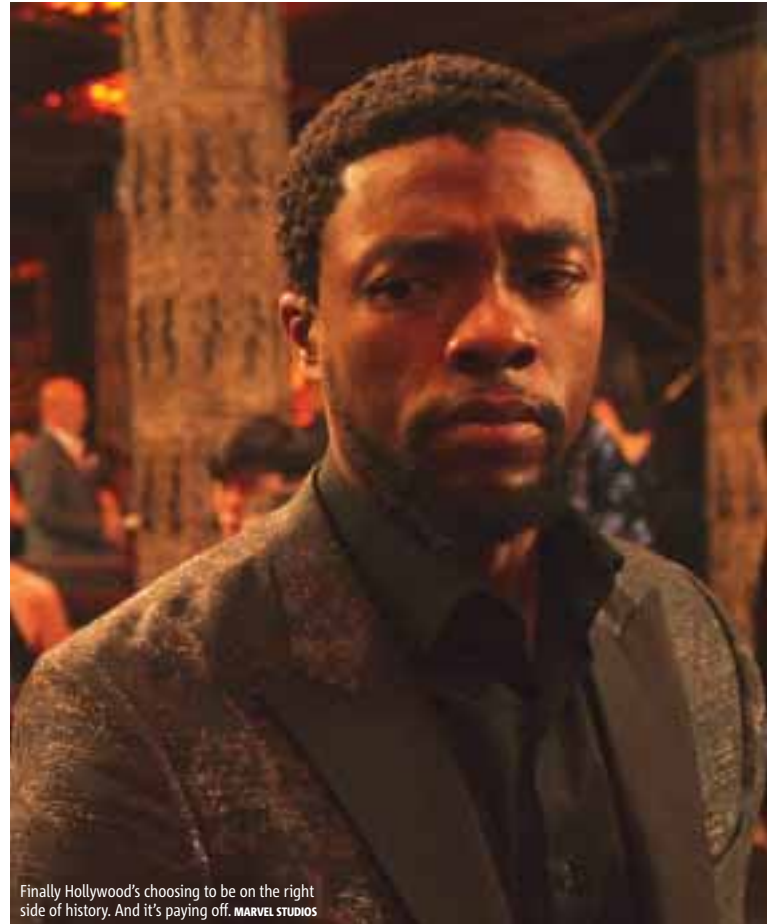
But why has it taken so long for a film like "Black Panther" to be made? Why did Hollywood studios shun diverse casts and refuse to approach subject matters and topics that audiences were pinning to see?

Chadwick Boseman explained it best at the

Chinese American Film Festival in November after picking up the award for the Most Popular U.S. Actor in China: "As African-American actors we are told that our popularity and our movies don't travel overseas."

Even on the rare occurrences that such films are made, studios make sure they keep production costs low and market them only to American audiences. "Black Panther" is bucking that trend, as it's being heavily promoted worldwide, and early predictions are that it has galvanized black cinema-goers everywhere.

Sure, there've been other of black superheroes. In 1993 Robert Townsend starred in "The Meteor Man," followed 12 months later by the Damon Wayans-led "Blankman," both of which were comedic ... and bombed. Then there was the "Blade" trilogy between 1998 and 2004, while Will Smith's superhero slacker "Hancock" arrived in 2008, but neither of these films looked to explore



Finally Hollywood's choosing to be on the right side of history. And it's paying off. MARVEL STUDIOS

the blackness of their characters.

The argument could be made that even the Marvel Cinematic Universe has played it safe and taken too long to bring "Black Panther" to the big-screen, as the MCU launched all the way back in 2008. The character even had to make his de-

but in "Captain America: Civil War" before being given his own solo adventure.

While Marvel has been busy developing and shooting "Black Panther," though, the likes of "Straight Outta Compton," "Hidden Figures" and "Moonlight" have been released and im-

pressed at the box office, proving there was a huge interest in characters and films of this ilk all along.

"Black Panther" is the ultimate proof of the stories still waiting to be told and the worlds still waiting to be explored. It's just embarrassing that it's taken Hollywood so long to tell them.

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Everything you need to know about Spyscape, Midtown's new interactive hub of espionage.



EVA KIS
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You may think the closest you've ever been to the spy world is watching *The Americans* on your sofa. But if you've ever shopped online or even just walked down a public street, you've probably been spied on.

You may as well learn to spy back. That's the premise of Spyscape, a new interactive museum that immerses you in the history and techniques of

espionage, all the while training you with activities created by real spies to be more aware of when it's happening to you.

"We hope this will be a really empowering experience for people to start to see their world differently, see themselves differently, and understand how the types of skills that spies use can be relevant to their daily lives," says Shelby Prichard, Spyscape's chief of staff.

Ready to bring out your inner James Bond? Here's what you need to know.

It was designed by real spies

The advisory board for Spyscape consists of former heads of agencies both in the U.S. and the

U.K., as well as white-hat hackers.

"Whenever we explained the concept and how we're thinking about making this world of spying more accessible, we had really great reception," says Prichard.

You get to play real spy games

Over the course of Spyscape, you'll find yourself completing real tests given to aspiring espionage agents.

As a World War II spy behind enemy lines, you must escape by decrypting coded messages. You'll get a crash course in spotting a liar, then test those skills by sitting in on an interrogation where you must determine if a suspect is lying.

But the coolest room

by far is the Special Ops training room, where you'll be dodging motion-sensor lasers to complete challenges, Ethan Hunt style.

And to toast your victory, Spyscape has its own cocktail bar for all your shaken-not-stirred martini needs.

Get up close with real spy gear

Most everything spying related is done by computers these days, which doesn't make for particularly thrilling museum stuff.

But a century ago, you had foldable motorcycles that could be dropped by airplanes, pipes that hid miniature daggers and a PalmPilot that outed Robert Hanson, a KGB agent who managed to work at the FBI for 22 years before getting caught.

And there's of course a gift shop to send you home with some of your own surveillance tools developed in-house like a scarf with hidden compartments and encrypted birthday cards, plus a hacker-curated bookshop with over 700 titles.

Would you consider a career change?

Visitors are given an identity band when they enter, which is scanned

things to do

at kiosks throughout the exhibits that measure traits like risk tolerance and personality through questions like "I'll say anything to get what I want" or "I get stressed easily." They also record how well you perform on the various activities.

Then, in the final Debrief room you stand before a full-length mirror while all the data is compiled to reveal which of 10 spy roles you're best suited for.

"We developed this profiling system in concert with the former head of training for British intelligence, so it's a super legitimate look at how the intelligence community thinks about what it takes to be different kinds of spy," says Prichard.

In other words, we wouldn't be surprised if someone were keeping an eye on your results.

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Eat your way to prosperity

Celebrate the Chinese New Year with lucky foods, tasty desserts and traditions at these restaurants. **EVA KIS**



Hakkasan

The Theater District's luxe Cantonese restaurant is serving a special dessert called a Macar-tune all month. A fusion of a fortune cookie and macaron, each treat (complimentary with every meal) also contains a New York City-themed fortune written by author Jay McInerney. They'll also have a wishing tree where you can hang your hopes for the coming year, plus a Lucky prix-fixe menu for good fortune (through March 4). 311 W. 43rd St.

Rice & Gold

Dale Talde's Rice & Gold serves up his take on the world's food through an Asian lens. For the Lunar New Year weekend (Feb. 16-17), enjoy a special family-style menu of six dishes (\$50pp) designed to bring every kind of prosperity your doorstep, like Wealth (pork and truffle dumplings, shrimp har gow, vegetable spring rolls) and Family Harmony (twice-cooked long beans). If you need something stronger to start the year off right, there's the Year of the Dog cocktail

made with Absolut Elyx, honey syrup, grapefruit juice, white wine and thyme. 50 Bowery

Bessou

It doesn't get more comforting (and necessary, in this weather) than a hot pot, which is what you'll find at NoHo's Japanese comfort food spot Bessou. They've teamed up with Sakeman for a special Lunar New Year Nabe Party on Feb. 18 with a three-course, communal-style dinner of otsumami, Papa's Spicy Yosenabe (seafood hot pot with

king crab, shrimp and diver scallops in a spicy miso broth) and a glass of Shiragiku Nigori hot sake for \$40pp. Seatings at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m., 5 Bleecker St.

DaDong

Chinese celebrity chef Dong Zhenxiang's DaDong restaurant, newly opened in Midtown, is famous for its Peking duck. But for the Chinese New Year, it's dumplings taking center stage. Watch as they're filled and folded at stations throughout the restaurant, with each table receiving a compli-

mentary order. Guests will also take home a red envelope — the color is said to be lucky and ward off bad juju — containing prizes like a bottle of bubbly at your next visit. 3 Bryant Park

Pinch Chinese

Complimenting its usual menu, Pinch Chinese will be adding some iconic Chinese New Year dishes (served a la carte) for a karmic prosperity boost we can all use. Enjoy crispy rice cakes, seafood noodle stew, turnip cakes, red bean dumplings and

black sesame tang yuan (dessert rice dumplings) in rice wine from Feb. 16-23. 177 Prince St.

Mr. Bing

Beijing street food mini-chain Mr Bing will present a traditional Chinese treat along with a hong bao (red envelope) to every customer from Feb. 16-25. Inside is a coupon for a free order of dumplings with the next purchase of a bing. Note that they just launched breakfast bings for double your dumpling joy. mr-bing.com



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YOUR WEEKEND STARTS NOW

PARTY

Music on New York

Following blowout parties in cities like London and Ibiza, it's time for Music on New York. The music label's one-night-only all-night rager will take place at a Brooklyn warehouse highlighting house and techno sounds, while introducing the underground party series to the U.S. after making a name for itself across Europe. Feb. 16, 11 p.m.-6 a.m., Depot 52 Warehouse, 7 52nd St., Brooklyn, \$40-\$99, musicon.com

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Chinese Firecracker Ceremony and Cultural Festival

The Better Chinatown Society's New Year's celebrations kick off this weekend with 600,000 firecrackers set off to ward away evil ghosts and usher in the Year of the Dog. The Chinese Firecracker Ceremony and Cultural Festival also features traditional music and dancing, along with authentic food and drink. Feb. 16, 11 a.m., Sara D. Roosevelt Park, Grand St. at Chrystie St., free, betterchinatown.com

FUN

Lego Live!

Let your inner child run wild — or bring your actual kids — to Lego Live, the first official convention of Lego enthusiasts. There will be 65,000 square feet of Lego fun, from themed play zones and a giant pool of bricks to free-build to your imagination, plus talks with master builders, giant sculptures and interactive games. Feb. 16-18, Pier 36, 299 South St., \$30 and up, liveevent.lego.com

ARTS

Women Immigrants of New York

When we talk about the lives of immigrants in NYC, who are we really talking about? This exhibit at the Queens Museum invites guests to get to know 16 of the young immigrant women who make their home here through stories, videos and photos about their journeys and dreams. It kicks off with a free reception this Saturday, 1 p.m.-4 p.m. with Iraqi and Nepali bites, a collaborative mural, music and a pop-up shop. Feb. 17-March 18, Queens Museum, New York City Building, \$8 (suggested), queensmuseum.org

MUSIC

For the Love of Jazz

When V-Day falls on Wednesday, you get a full week to celebrate. This weekend, get away to a real lighthouse with a stunning seascape view to enjoy mood-setting standards by the Israeli MusicTalks Jazz Quartet with vocalists Thana Alexa and Michael Mayo as part of Kingsborough Community College's For the Love of Jazz series. Feb. 16, 7 p.m., 2001 Oriental Blvd., Brooklyn, \$40, onstageat-kingsborough.com

WINE

Dessert Wine Festival

Cozy up to some of the Finger Lakes' best dessert wines (ice wine and port) at this dinner organized by NYC's only vineyard within city limits, Rooftop Reds. It's invited six wineries and paired their offerings with dishes from a local restaurant, all enhanced by Brooklyn artist Jessica Dalrymple's naturalist paintings. End your night with mulled wine by the outdoor fire pits. Feb. 17, 5 & 8 p.m., 313 Butler Gallery, 313 Butler St., \$40-\$50, eventbrite.com T. MICHELLE MURPHY

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Switzerland beyond the slopes

The best things to do in Switzerland that don't require strapping on skis.

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Ride the world's steepest cogwheel railway

Mount Pilatus looms over Lucerne and reaching the top involves a ride on the world's steepest cog railway. A 10-minute walk from the summit station takes you to the central peak of Esel and an observation platform with magnificent views of Lucerne, the lake, and surrounding Alps.

Discover the origins of the universe

The home to the world's largest, most powerful particle accelerator resides underneath the European Organization



Alpine villages have plenty to recommend them off-piste. GETTY IMAGES

for Nuclear Research (CERN) on the outskirts of Geneva. The machine, which uses magnets to smash together particles moving at almost the

speed of light, allowed scientists to identify the Higgs boson in 2012. Better known as the "God particle," the Higgs boson helps explain why

much of the universe's mass exists. Reserve early: The two-hour guided tour fills up quickly.

Stroll through Lucerne

In the geographic heart of the country, Lucerne offers a quintessential Swiss experience: Jaw-dropping mountains lead to a medieval town nestled along the edge of a sapphire-blue lake lined with waterfront promenades and crisscrossed by picture-perfect, wood-covered bridges.

Go to the Top of Europe

With an altitude of 11,333 feet, the Jungfrau is the most accessible high-altitude peak in Europe. A 30-minute train ride takes you to the Top of Europe restaurant, a glass-and-steel building with views of the Eiger. Go even higher with a high-speed elevator that takes you 364 feet up to the Sphinx Terrace and the vast Aletsch Glacier, the longest glacier in the Swiss Alps.

Listen to Music

The Swiss hills are alive with the sound of roughly 300 music festivals. A few of the biggest include the Lucerne Festival, Paleo in Nyon and, of course,

in 1970, the sapphire- and ruby-colored windows have drawn art lovers and tourists ever since.

Go for a Hike

Small yellow signs dot nearly 40,000 miles of hiking trails throughout Switzerland, including the Swiss National Park, the Alps' oldest national park and UNESCO biosphere reserve. Along nearly 50 miles of hiking trails, you'll spot winding rivers, dense Alpine forest, and possibly ibexes, chamois, marmots and golden eagles.

Ride the rails

Swiss trains run like clockwork and they're an efficient, easy, and speedy way to get around.

They also wind through such stunning scenery that the journey becomes the experience. The most scenic are the Glacier Express between Zermatt and St. Moritz and the Bernina Express, which is the highest Alpine railway, crossing famous bridges and viaducts through Europe's highest concentration of hilltop castles.

Paddle the lakes

There are several thousand lakes in Switzerland, with one estimate putting the number at 7,000. Cruising along the crystalline water with the majestic Alps in the background is an idyllic experience. From Belle Époque paddle steamers to dinner cruises, there are an abundance of options. Favorites include those on Lucerne, Thun, Lugano, Geneva and Zurich lakes.

Eat like James Bond

Not far from Interlaken, the Schilthorn mountain rises up more than 9,700 feet. At its peak, accessed by a four-stage cable car ride, sits the revolving Piz Gloria restaurant, famous as the set of the 1969 James Bond movie "On Her Majesty's Secret Service."



Dine like James Bond at the sky-high Piz Gloria restaurant. PROVIDED

the world-famous Montreux Jazz Festival. In July, the festival hosts international jazz and pop fixtures as well as up-and-coming artists. The waterfront setting includes several free shows and food and drink stalls.

Eat Cheese

More than 450 types of cheese are produced in Switzerland, but two cheesy dishes reign supreme: fondue and raclette. Fondue, a country-wide staple, is a mix of hard cheese and a dash of white wine, garlic and brandy. Raclette is even simpler: a wedge of cheese is heated to melting, then scraped onto potatoes and cornichons.

See Chagall

In 1967, a retrospective of Marc Chagall's work brought the Russian-born artist to Zurich. At 80 years old, he sat in the Fraumünster and agreed to take on the long sought-after project of creating five stained-glass windows for the famous church. Installed

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Isles, Rangers rivalry losing luster



JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us


SLUMP CITY

The rivalry between the Islanders and Rangers is one of the best in hockey, if not all of sports given the excitement and vitriol that comes with it.

It's been a one-sided affair lately as the Islanders have won 12 of the last 15 meetings, cooling things down a bit.

While these are two teams currently desperate for points in order to stay in a tightly-packed playoff race, their recent struggles have left many searching for answers.

It's taken a little bit away from Thursday night's tilt, though a win over a big rival might be able to spark a playoff run for one of these sides.

RANGERS	LAST 21 GAMES	ISLANDERS
8-12-1	RECORD	7-12-2
49	GOALS FOR	61
17	GOALS AGAINST	85
34	SHOTS ALLOWED (PER GAME AVERAGE)	41
		
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EASTERN CONFERENCE PLAYOFF PICTURE

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

WASHINGTON CAPITALS- 71 PTS.

PITTSBURGH PENGUINS- 68 PTS.

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS- 66 PTS.

ATLANTIC DIVISION

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING- 79 PTS.

BOSTON BRUINS- 78 PTS.

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS- 73 PTS.

WILD CARD

NEW JERSEY DEVILS- 64 PTS.

CAROLINA HURRICANES- 63 PTS.

COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS- 62 PTS.

NEW YORK ISLANDERS- 60 PTS.

NEW YORK RANGERS- 59 PTS.

ISLES DEFENSE WILL DOOM GM SNOW

OPINION



JOE PANTORNO
@JoePantorno

It has become exhaustingly predictable for New York Islanders fans this season.

A defense that can only be compared to a sieve has constantly put the Brooklynites in compromising positions and has all but sabotaged their season.

Through 58 games, the Islanders defense has allowed a whopping 214 goals, which is by far the worst mark in the NHL. The second-worst blue-line unit, the Arizona Coyotes, have allowed 19 fewer tallies. But the Coyotes are the worst team in the NHL with just 40 points.

The Islanders are competing for a playoff spot, just three points out of the final Wild Card berth in the Eastern Conference.

Had it not been for New York's offense this season, which ranks second in the league with 194 goals for, they'd be right down near the bottom of the NHL standings with Arizona.

It's been especially

frustrating for the blue and orange faithful to see the defense attempt to repel the opposition as no lead is safe. In the past two months alone, the Islanders have allowed the tying or game-winning goal in the final two minutes of regulation five times.

Granted, this is a unit that is without Calvin de Haan for the remainder of the season and dealt with an extended absence from Johnny Boychuk. A unit led by Nick Leddy has been supported by unproven, inexperienced or simply not-good-enough options in the likes of Thomas Hickey, Dennis Seidenberg, Adam Pelech, Ryan Pullock, Sebastian Aho and Scott Mayfield (also injured).

Regardless of who suits up, an NHL defenseman should know how to clear their own zone or their goalie's crease and also how to disallow opposing skaters to simply enter the zone and get clear scoring chances on goal. The Islanders defense has shown time and time again that they cannot do that.

It was none more evident than during Sunday night's loss to the Calgary Flames in which the Islanders allowed



If Garth Snow doesn't address the Islanders defense, he'll be out of a job soon, writes Joe Pantorno. GETTY IMAGES

the game-winning goal with 1:05 remaining. The visitors had endless chances in front of New York's goal, making it a matter of time before Jaroslav Halak broke down to relinquish a 2-1 third-period lead.

The Islanders defense rarely does much to support their goaltenders, either. Out of 58 games, New York has allowed its opponents to record 30 or more shots 48 times, 40 or more shots 15 times and over 50 shots three times.

Tuesday night against the Columbus Blue Jack-

ets saw the Islanders allow 51 shots in a 4-1 loss.

In total, their 2,076 shots allowed is the most in the NHL, 121 more than the second-worst Toronto Maple Leafs.

Yet Islanders general manager Garth Snow has simply chalked up his defense's struggles to injuries, stating that it was "one-hundred percent" the reason for this horrendous season along the blue line.

Still, a team in a playoff race should be looking to make some kind of improvement to the defense then, right?

So far, you're dead wrong if you thought the answer was yes.

The NHL's trade deadline is rapidly approaching on Feb. 26 and the Islanders' names have not popped up much in rumored talks even with high-profile defensemen like Erik Karlsson and Oliver Ekman-Larsson possibly available. They have also had an opportunity to acquire some defensive help via waivers, but instead let veterans like Brendan Smith, Cody Franson simply clear the wire and head to the minors.

With captain John Tavares looking for reasons to stay with the Islanders as his contract expires after this season, Snow and his lack of action to better his roster won't make a long-term renewal any easier. Should they miss the playoffs and Tavares decide to test the free-agency waters and walk, the hockey world can point to Snow and the defense as the main reason why.

Loyalty can only count for so much. Why wouldn't a star like Tavares, who turns 28 just before the start of the 2018-19 season, want to play for an actual competitive team?

Should loyalty prevail and Tavares is gracious enough to re-sign with the Islanders regardless of the results of this season, that shouldn't mean Snow's job should be anywhere near safe.

Islanders' ownership should make this simple and give Snow an ultimatum: Improve this team and put a legitimate contender on the ice now or you'll be looking for a job next season.

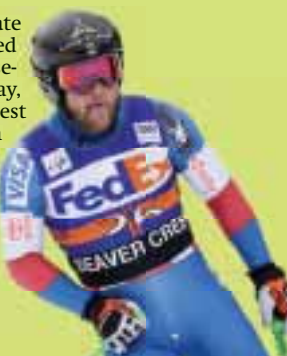
Another poor effort against the Rangers on Thursday night could speed up the process, though.



What to watch at the Olympics tonight

ALPINE SKIING MEN'S SUPER-G

After the unfortunate ankle injury suffered by Tommy Biesemeyer on Wednesday, the United States' best hope at a medal in the men's Super-G lies with **ANDREW WEIBRECHT**, who is ranked 37th in the world.



ALPINE SKIING WOMEN'S SLALOM

The skiing world has been patiently waiting for the start of the women's slalom event, which has been rescheduled multiple times due to the high winds Pyeongchang has provided so far. If things hold up on Thursday, we'll finally get to see **MIKAELA SHIFFRIN** in her best event.



MEN'S HOCKEY USA vs. SLOVAKIA

The United States hardly looked like the world power it was when rolling out a lineup with NHL players. But without the best talent the country has to offer, Team USA dropped its opener to lowly Slovenia in overtime. Now comes a meeting with Slovakia, already a must-win for **JORDAN GREENWAY** and the Americans.



MEN'S CURLING USA vs. SWEDEN

After a ninth-place finish in Sochi four years ago, the men's curling team started on the right foot with an opening win over South Korea. But Sweden is 2-0 and flying high after triumphs over those same Koreans and Denmark.



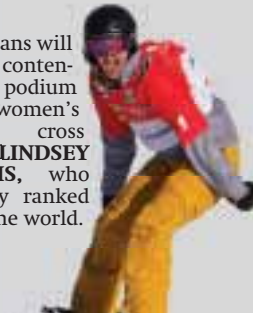
FIGURE SKATING MEN'S SINGLE SHORT PROGRAM

ADAM RIPPON captured the hearts of millions of Americans after his scintillating debut during the Team Event. Now he'll take centerstage in the singles short program as one of three Americans, including the always-dangerous Nathan Chen, who is looking to recover from a difficult start to his Olympic Games.



SNOWBOARDING WOMEN'S SNOWBOARD CROSS

The Americans will be serious contention for the podium in the women's snowboard cross thanks to **LINDSEY JACOBELLIS**, who is currently ranked second in the world.



SKELETON MEN'S FINAL

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Approved by the NYU School of Medicine
IRB #s 15-01480 PI: Marya Gwadz, PhD

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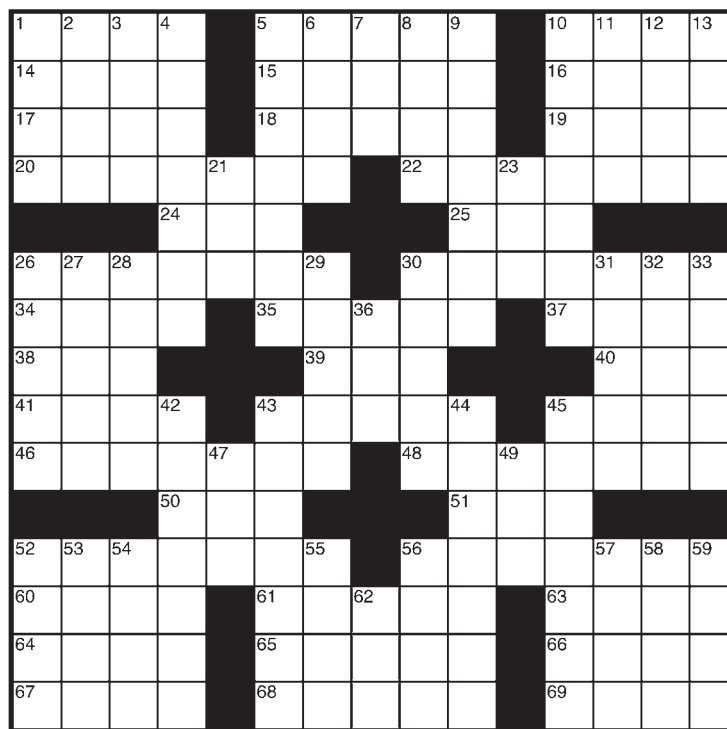
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- 61 Stand for Van Gogh
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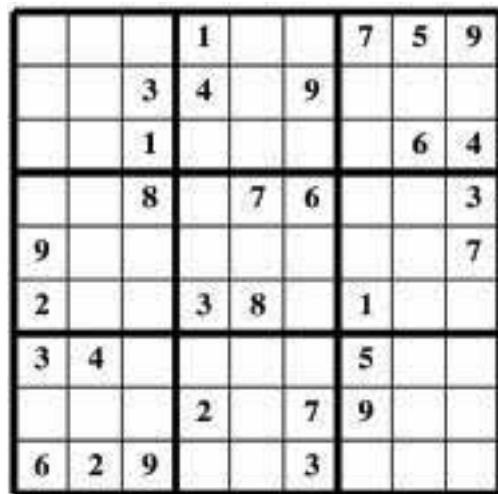
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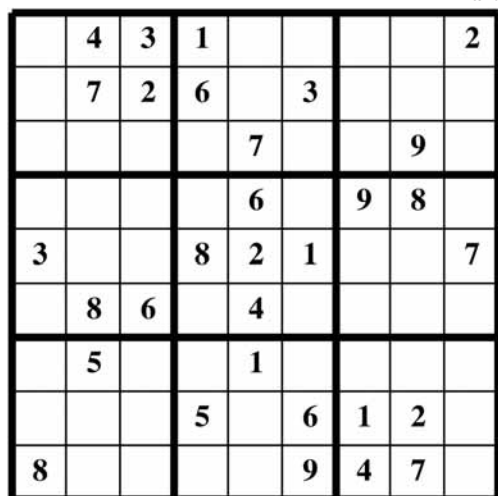


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Taurus Someone will take advantage of you. Don't let compliments go to your head. Only do what you feel is worth your time and effort. Someone's motives are questionable.



Gemini You must draw the line if someone is placing too much pressure on you. Don't offer something that you cannot deliver. Honesty will be in your best interest.



Cancer Refuse to let a friend, colleague or loved one take advantage of you. There is only so much you can do before you are faced with an emotional, financial or physical cost.



Leo Scrutinize contracts, money matters and joint ventures before you give the go-ahead. If someone puts up a fuss because you ask questions, know enough to walk away.



Virgo Look over personal papers. Be careful when sharing confidential information. One of your peers is likely to use what you divulge to discredit you or take advantage of you.



Libra Personal changes will make a difference to your life and the people in it. Don't go overboard when shopping or socializing.



Scorpio Consider the changes you want to make and the consequences your choices will have on you and on those you love. Make love a priority and offer kindness over discord.



Sagittarius You'll be tempted to take on too much or to overspend. Before you commit, look for hidden costs. Someone will try to trick you into something you don't need.



Capricorn Moderation will be required when dealing with others. Stick to your regular routine and avoid being persuaded to participate in something that is costly or discrediting.



Aquarius Stick to what's affordable and what can help you maintain a healthy and clear attitude. Revert to a regimented routine that worked for you in the past.



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